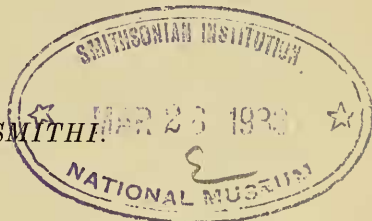


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

NOTES ON *NILTAVA SMITHI*!BY J. H. RILEY!¹

In 1929, I described in these Proceedings, page 162, *Niltava smithi*, founded upon a single female from the summit of Doi Sutep, Siam. Later the same year de Schauensee² described *Niltava williaminae* from the same locality, also founded upon a single female. Recently Dr. Hugh M. Smith has sent the U. S. National Museum two adult males and two adult females of *Niltava smithi*, from Siam, taken at Khun Tan at 4,000 feet. With the acquisition of the males it became at once apparent that the form was closely related to *Niltava davidi* and possibly was the same as *Niltava davidi lychnis* of western China. I am indebted to the Museum of Comparative Zoology for the loan of three males and one female of the latter and to the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, for forwarding the type of *Niltava williaminae*, for study in this connection.

The males of *Niltava smithi* are similar to those of *N. davidi lychnis*, but the black frontal band is narrower, the pileum duller blue, the back duller, duskier blue, the shining blue spot on the sides of the neck is duller, less bright and the size larger.

The females of *N. smithi* and *N. davidi lychnis* are quite distinct. The female of the latter has the frons and pileum concolor or only a little lighter dresden brown than the back, while in *N. smithi*, the frons is narrowly clay color; the feathers of the pileum and nape deep olive-gray at the tip, a little deeper sub-terminally, presenting a somewhat scaled appearance; in *N. d. lychnis* the mentum is white, followed by a small buffy spot, the cheeks, ear-coverts and sides of throat like the chest, buffy brown, the jugular spot white, while in *N. smithi* the lores, chin, throat, ear-coverts, and ocular area are clay color edged or tipped with deep olive-gray, making these areas more or less flammulated, the chest dark olive-buff, the jugular patch deep colonial buff. In *N. d. lychnis* the belly and under tail-coverts

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²Proceedings Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., vol. 81, p. 469.

are white, while in *N. smithi*, the belly is pale smoke gray, only the center whitish, and the under tail-coverts are deep olive-buff with light grayish olive centers. The mantle in *N. smithi* is buffy brown with a grayish cast and the upper tail-coverts buckthorn brown; in *N. d. lychnis* the back is dresden brown and the upper tail coverts cinnamon brown. The tail in *N. smithi* is prouts brown on the middle feathers and on the outer web of the remainder, dusky on the inner web of the outer feathers and the tips of all the feathers, the shafts blackish, while in *N. d. lychnis*, the tail is cinnamon brown and the shafts of the feathers are the same. The wings in *N. smithi* are blackish, the feathers only narrowly edged with the color of the back. In *N. d. lychnis*, they are dusky, the feathers broadly edged with cinnamon. The female of *N. smithi* and the only female examined of *N. davidi lychnis*, both lack the light soft blue-violet neck patch of the female of *N. sondara*, though La Touche³ describes the female *Niltava davidi davidi* as having it.

The type of *Niltava williaminae*, marked as a female, when compared with the three females of *N. smithi* collected by Dr. Hugh M. Smith, has the pileum more washed with brownish; the back a deeper, more reddish buffy brown without the grayish cast; the upper tail-coverts a deeper, more reddish brown; below the breast and belly are more washed with clay-color and the under tail-coverts deeper buff. While the type does not exactly match any of the three females of *N. smithi*, I am nevertheless of the opinion that it is only an individual variation of this species, as none of the differences are great. It may be that the type of *williaminae* is really a young male. A young male of *Niltava sondara denotata* in the U. S. National Museum shows this same degree of difference when compared with the female of the same form.

It remains to say a word concerning the males of *N. smithi* and *N. sondara denotata*. In the former the pileum, neck patch, shoulder patch, and rump are a much darker, less shining blue; the back dusker; below the differences are not as great, but *denotata* is lighter, near raw sienna, while *smithi* has more of a tawny cast. It seems strange that the males of *N. smithi*, *N. davidi*, and *N. sondara* should be so similar and the females so different, but it is a case similar to that of many species of *Cyornis*. The specimens measure as follows:

- 2 ♂♂ of *Niltava smithi*: wing 93.5–100; tail 78–82; culmen 12–13 mm.
 - 3 ♂♂ of *N. davidi lychnis*: wing 88.5–94 (91.2); tail 66–74 (69.8); culmen. 11.5–12 (11.7) mm.
 - 3 ♀♀ of *N. smithi*: wing 92–100 (95.7); tail 68–81 (74); culmen 12–12.5 (12.2) mm.
 - 1 ♀ of *N. d. lychnis*: wing 92; tail 62.5; culmen 11 mm.
- The type of *N. williaminae*: wing 100; tail 80; culmen 12 mm.

³Handbook Birds E. China, pt. 2, 1925, p. 171.